Indexed: Philpapers, 2025, 12 pages

The Agonistic Human Ontology Project

Petru Stefaroi

THE SELF/EGO FROM AN ONTOLOGICAL-CONFRONTATIONAL PERSPECTIVE:

Personality, Personhood, and the Person's Conduct – Towards a New Interpretation?

Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Historical Markers of the Concept of the Self. The Traditional, Ontological-Static, and Structural Perspective on the Self
3. An Ontological-Confrontational and Dynamic Perspective on the Self. The Self – Central Onto-Formation of the Personal Ontos
4. Properties and Laws of the Self in the Process of Formation, Being, and Functioning from an Ontological-Confrontational Perspective
5. The Formation of the Self from an Ontological-Confrontational Perspective
6. The Self – Field of Internal and Relational Ontological Confrontations
7. The Being and Functioning of the Self as Part of the Personal Ontos
8. The Self from an Ontological-Confrontational Perspective, Personality, Personhood, and the Person's Conduct
9. Conclusions

Abstract: The article **"THE SELF FROM AN ONTOLOGICAL-CONFRONTATIONAL PERSPECTIVE"** proposes a radical re-evaluation of the Self, rejecting the traditional view (from Plato to Descartes) that defines it as a static structure destined for harmony. Instead, it argues that the Self is, fundamentally, an **agonistic structure** and the central **onto-formation** of the **Personal Ontos**. The core thesis asserts that **tension and confrontation are not a pathology**, but the **active ontological principle of being**, the necessary engine for development and ontological actualization (**Ontification**). The Self functions as a **dynamic stabilizer** that does not seek peace, but rather the **agonistic equilibrium**—that is, the highest level of productive tensiune it can manage—thereby avoiding stagnation and psychic entropy. This process **is** described by five essential properties (**Emergence, Transmergence, Sinmergence, Convergence, Telegence**) which define how the Self is born and operates. The being of the Self is achieved through continuous **"agonistic persistence,"** engaging in an essential four-way struggle with the other onto-formations: the **Organism** (the struggle for măștera over facticity), the **Mind** (the struggle for decisional autonomy), the **Soul/Affectivity** (the struggle for the modulation of passions), and the **Moral Conscience** (the struggle for ethical authenticity against norms). Consequently, **Personality** is redefined as a dynamic synthesis, a repertoire of acquired tensional-resilient strategies; **Personhood** becomes the socio-axiological subject whose moral identity is earned through confrontation and responsible assumption; and the **Person's Conduct** is the operational and visible expression of this internal tensional equilibrium, reflecting the Self's ability to transform opposition and confrontation into effective action.

Keywords: Ontology, Ontological-Confrontational Perspective, Self, Ego, Agonistic Equilibrium, Personal Ontos, Ontification, Emergence, Transmergence, Sinmergence, Convergence, Telegence, Agonistic Architecture, Dynamic Personality, Personhood, Internal Confrontations, Paradigm Shift

1. Introduction

The **Self** (*Eu-l*) has profiled itself for millennia as a central enigma, an inexhaustible subject that transcends the boundaries of philosophical,

psychological, and anthropological reflection, being, in its essence, the measure and the mystery of being. For centuries, the major philosophical tradition exhibited a clear predilection for stability, unity, and certainty. The quest was for a stable, static, and essentialist Self—whether it was defined as a unique and indubitable thinking substance (Descartes), or as a universal and legislative moral consciousness (Kant). In this dominant paradigm, which postulated a finality of interior harmony and rational tranquility, confrontation and tension were inevitably viewed as a defect, a pathology, or a deviation that had to be either subordinated to reason or eliminated through asceticism. This classical vision of the Self, however, ultimately failed to explain the radical and often contradictory dynamism of subjective experience.

However, existential experience and new philosophical orientations impose the radical necessity of a rupture from this unilateral and idealistic vision. The present work addresses the scientific and philosophical community with the proposal of a new analytical framework, one that is radically dynamic and tensional. The central question guiding this endeavor is: What if the Self is not destined to be peaceful or unified by definition, but is, structurally, a field of permanent tension and an **agonistic nucleus**—a fundamentally conflictual structure? The essence of the Self, we demonstrate, is not static, but dynamic and strained, operating as the **central onto-formation** of the **Personal Ontos**—that primordial and fundamental space where consciousness not only resides but also clashes head-on with interior and exterior reality. This thesis shifts the center of gravity from *what* the Self is, to *how* the Self constructs itself in real-time through resistance and dynamic processes.

Here, in this internal space of maximum density, where being unfolds, lived experiences (following phenomenology), complex thoughts within the cognitive structure, contradictory emotions in the affective sphere, and the pressures of the socio-cultural environment do not merely coexist passively. They intersect violently, entering into a constant and fundamental tension that defines the existential condition itself. This tension (Kierkegaard's Anxiety) is not a dysfunction or a simple psychological failure. On the contrary, it is, as we will argue in detail, the **driving force** that generates essential confrontations necessary for dynamic existence and for the **ontification** of the subject in the face of its inherent limitations. Without this internal tensional energy, development would cease, giving way to entropy and psychic stagnation.

The **Ontological-Confrontational Perspective**, which we propose in this work, surpasses frameworks that treat confrontation as a mere psychological or sociological consequence. Our thesis asserts that the Self is, structurally and functionally, a **structure of resistance**, and that internal and relational confrontations (with the Organism, Mind, Soul, and Conscience) constitute the **active ontological principle** of identity.

The essential tension between the Self and alterity is the necessary basis for its formation, functioning, and full becoming.

Starting from this radical premise, the article explores and expands upon the implications of this unique vision, answering the fundamental question: How exactly does this ontological-confrontational perspective influence the formation of **Personality, Personhood, and Conduct**, compelling us to view them not as results of pre-existing harmony, but as dynamic, ever-provisional syntheses resulting directly from confrontation? This analysis leads us to the **NECESSITY** of accepting a new interpretation, establishing an imperative for the re-evaluation, from the perspective of the Personal Ontos, of the entire set of concepts studied, under the title: **THE SELF FROM AN ONTOLOGICAL-CONFRONTATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: Personality, Personhood, and the Person's Conduct – Towards a New Interpretation?** The present work aims to launch and substantiate this new thesis into the space of philosophical and scientific debate. To fully grasp the nature of this rupture and establish our starting point, we must first briefly review how the Self was conceived and defined in the traditional view.

2. Historical Markers of the Concept of the Self. The Traditional, Ontological-Static, and Structural Perspective on the Self

The history of the Self is a long narrative spanning thousands of years, a perpetual oscillation between sought stability and conflictual dynamism, a journey that begins with Greek metaphysics. In Antiquity, **Plato** configured the soul as a site of ideal balance between the three parts (rational, spirited, and appetitive), where reason was supposed to dominate the passions, establishing a normative model of internal harmony that heavily influenced Western thought. Subsequently, **Aristotle** defined the soul as the form of the body (*entelechia*), an actualization of potential, yet maintaining a teleological vision of the human being, whose final realization implied a certain virtuous stability.

In the Hellenistic period, this search for tranquility intensified as a response to social instability. **Stoics**, such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, emphasized reason as the supreme tool for controlling emotions (*apatheia*). Epicurus sought inner peace (*ataraxia*) by eliminating fear and pain, both visions aiming at the pacification of internal tensions as the supreme goal of a successful life.

This tendency toward stability culminated in the Modern Era, becoming the backdrop for the traditional ontological perspective. **René Descartes** radicalized subjectivism, reducing the Self to the **Cogito**, the unique "thinking substance." **John Locke**, although shifting the focus from

substance to consciousness given by memory and experience, maintained the necessity of a smooth continuity of the self. **David Hume**, though a critic of the idea of a self-substance, remained within the idea that the Self is a bundle of perceptions, still seeking a coherence among them.

Subsequently, **Immanuel Kant** structured the Self as a transcendental instance (the *I-think*), a necessary but purely formal condition of all possible knowledge, denying it substantial empirical content but affirming its functional, unitary necessity. German Idealism, with **Fichte** and **Schelling**, took this autonomy to the extreme, viewing the Absolute Self as the source of all reality, a vision that absorbs any conflict into its totalizing system.

The true turning point, however, came with the destructive and creative force of thinkers who recognized conflict as the engine of existence. **Arthur Schopenhauer**, through his concept of blind and irrational **Will** manifesting in every being, anticipated humanity's constant conflict with an uncontrollable inner force, the primordial source of suffering. **Søren Kierkegaard**, the father of Existentialism, described the Self as a tensional synthesis between finite and infinite, temporal and eternal, defined by **anxiety** and desperate choice, a permanent inner struggle.

Friedrich Nietzsche, celebrating Dionysian forces, identified in the **Will to Power** a force for overcoming and growth through resistance and self-sacrifice, glorifying tension as the source of value and the basis of his *Übermensch* concept. **Freudian psychoanalysis** demolished the Cartesian unity, revealing an Ego (*Eu*) trapped in a constant struggle between the drives of the Id (instincts) and the censorship of the Superego (morality), a structure conflictual by definition. **Carl Jung** added the tension between the conscious and the collective unconscious, defining the Self through the unification of opposing archetypes. These currents, from psychoanalysis to existentialism, elevated conflict from a mere pathology to an essential dimension, but one still predominantly psychological or part of the traditional, non-confrontational ontology, which this article challenges.

The **Ontological-Confrontational Perspective**, which constitutes the central thesis of this work, affirms, in a radical and unequivocal manner, that the Self is not a subject meant to be harmonious, seeking tranquility. It is, structurally, a fundamental **agonistic structure** and an entity of **Emergence**. Here, internal and external confrontations are not fleeting events, the result of unfavorable circumstances, but constitutive and inherent elements of its identity structure. In this sense, **Conflict**, confrontation is not just a reality, but the **active ontological principle of being**, not a simple secondary effect or a manufacturing defect. The Self functions as a dynamic and intense **field of forces**, a permanent chessboard, in which different instances (impulses, reason, norms) simultaneously attract and repel one another. This game of attractions and repulsions generates, paradoxically, cohesion and the vital energy

necessary for action and survival. This vision resonates strongly with Hegelian Dialectics, where progress and becoming are impossible without the Thesis-Antithesis tension, a tension that our Self continuously experiences and synthesizes through an uninterrupted dynamic movement, although we do not accept a final and static synthesis, like the Absolute Spirit. The connection is direct also with post-Hegelian Existentialism: Jean-Paul Sartre sees the relationship with Alterity (The Other) as a permanent struggle for recognition and objectification—"hell is other people." Maurice Merleau-Ponty described the subject as a tension between the Lived Body (*Leib*) and consciousness, a struggle that we subsume to internal confrontations, emphasizing that there is no consciousness without its tensional body. The contemporary philosopher Paul Ricoeur emphasized the self that defines itself through commitment in the face of alterity, an eminently tensional and narrative relationship, defined by *ipse* (self-identity) versus *idem* (sameness identity).

To fully ground this thesis in an original framework, we must now move from the critiques of the traditional view to the concrete definition of the Self's nature, establishing it as the core entity of the human being. Therefore, the next section will detail our proposed **Ontological-Confrontational and Dynamic Perspective on the Self** and define the Self as the central onto-formation of the **Personal Ontos**.

3. An Ontological-Confrontational and Dynamic Perspective on the Self. The Self – Central Onto-Formation of the Personal Ontos

In striking contrast to the traditional vision of major philosophy, which has postulated for millennia a stable, essentialist, and predestined harmonious Self—following the thread of thinking from the Cartesian substance to the Kantian legislative reason—this work launches and substantiates a radically new framework of analysis: the **Ontological-Confrontational Perspective**. The fundamental premise guiding the entire endeavor is that the Self is not conceived to be peaceful or unified. On the contrary, it is, in its very internal structure, a **field of permanent tension** and an **agonistic nucleus**. Therefore, the essence of the Self is not static, but intrinsically **dynamic and strained**, imposing itself as the **central onto-formation** of a broader and deeper framework: the **Personal Ontos**.

The **Personal Ontos** is not a mere psychological instance, but represents the fundamental ontological framework, the primordial space of being where consciousness manifests as an active presence. It is an inexhaustible reservoir of ceaseless tension and potential. In this internal space of maximum density, where being unfolds, the Self does not just passively reside, but clashes head-on with internal and external reality.

Lived experiences (following phenomenology), complex thoughts within the cognitive structure, often contradictory emotions in the affective sphere, and the relentless pressures of the socio-cultural environment do nothing but **violently intersect**, generating a constant tension that defines the existential condition itself.

This tension, similar to the **Anxiety** described by Kierkegaard, must not be interpreted as a dysfunction, a pathology, or a simple psychological failure. On the contrary, it is, in our view, the **driving force generating essential confrontations**, absolutely necessary for maintaining a **dynamic existence** and for the realization of the **ontification** of the subject in the face of its inherent limitations. Without this kinetic energy, generated by opposing forces, development would abruptly cease, giving way to inevitable entropy and psychic stagnation. Thus, this perspective surpasses those frameworks that treat conflict as a mere consequence, elevating it to the rank of a principle.

Our thesis asserts, in a radical and unequivocal manner, that the Self is structurally and functionally a **structure of resistance**, and that internal and relational confrontations are not simple passing events, but constitute the **active ontological principle** of identity. The essential tension between the Self and alterity is the necessary, unconditioned basis for its full formation and becoming. **Conflict is not a defect, but a *sine qua non* condition of existence**. The Self functions as an intense and dynamic field of forces, similar to Hegelian Dialectics (Thesis-Antithesis), where progress is impossible without tension. The Self continuously experiences and synthesizes this uninterrupted dynamic movement, although, essentially, we reject the idea of a final and static synthesis. Ultimately, through this Ontological-Confrontational framework, the Self assumes the role of the subject that **self-creates** through friction and opposition, transforming the raw energy of struggle into action and meaning, thereby ensuring a positive role for conflict and becoming the source of its own freedom.

To understand exactly how this central onto-formation manages and transforms these opposing forces into functional cohesion and the engine of development, it is essential to define the constitutive mechanisms that enable it to operate this way. Thus, in the section immediately following, we will explore in detail those **Properties and Laws** fundamental to governing how the Self forms, subsists, and functions within the Personal Ontos.

4. Properties and Laws of the Self in the Process of Formation, Being, and Functioning from an Ontological-Confrontational Perspective

The Self, understood as a dynamic structure generated by conflict, exhibits five fundamental properties that define its mode of constitution and functioning within the **Personal Ontos**—properties that reveal its complex and non-linear nature. These properties function as constitutive **laws**, not just as accidental descriptions.

The first of these is **Emergence**, through which the Self appears as a new, irreducible quality, generated directly from the multiple tensions (biologic, social, psychic) acting upon the subject. This concept finds strong analogies in **Edgar Morin's Theory of Complex Systems**, where superior structures are born from the chaotic interaction of inferior components. The Self is more than the simple sum of its conflicting parts; it is a new level of organization.

Next is **Transmergence**, its unique capacity to be a functional mediator that traverses and integrates the diverse levels of being, from corporality (somatic) to moral consciousness (normative), functioning as a tensional liaison between the strata of being. This property ensures functional unity and integrity despite the structural diversity and opposing forces it hosts.

The third is **Sinmergence** (*Co-mergence*), which represents its inherent co-emergence with the environment and Alterity, emphasizing that the Self is not an isolated monolith (anti-Cartesianism), but is always a situated and embodied, interconnected subject. The Self cannot develop in isolation, but only through its conflictual and necessary interaction with the world and with others, confirming the theses of symbolic interactionism and pragmatism.

The fourth is **Convergence** (*Conmergența*), which describes the network of internal tensional-functional interconnections, showing that the Self is not coherent through a lack of conflict, but through the **active management and orchestration of these tensions**. It maintains an **agonistic and dynamic equilibrium**, a concept that resonates with the ideas of Pragmatism, especially those of John Dewey, about experience as a process of active adjustment to the environment based on problem-solving, but also with the Theory of Complex Thinking.

Finally, **Telegence** (*Telegenta*) is the property of proactive and purpose-driven orientation towards the future (*telos*), in which the Self utilizes tension (the gap between what is currently and what ought to be in the future) as a vector that propels it toward possibility. This property is essential for freedom and is similar to the concept of the *project* in Existentialism.

These properties impose a clear **Ontological Law**, which is the operating principle of the Ontos: **Conflict and Confrontation are not a pathology or a defect, but a *sine qua non* condition of being and development**. This view is supported by **Developmental Psychology** (see Erik Erikson), which views identity crises as nodal points necessary for maturation. Attempting to annul conflict means, in fact, annulling the possibility of growth and becoming, condemning the subject to stagnation and symbolic death. A fundamental understanding of these properties is indispensable for grasping the subsequent stages of the Self's development. Therefore, the next section will explore how the Self, driven by these constitutive laws, forms its structure through a process marked by layered and necessary crises—the **Formation of the Self from an Ontological-Confrontational Perspective**.

5. The Formation of the Self from an Ontological-Confrontational Perspective

The formation of the Self is a layered and **agonistic process** that transforms initial interactions and primary tensions into a complex internal structure, a veritable **Bildung** marked by crises and temporary resolutions of tension. This process is one of continuous metamorphosis, not governed by linear and definitive stages.

The process begins with the **Contact Stage**, where the incipient Self perceives the primary tension between its inherent biological needs (hunger, safety) and the limits imposed by the external environment, realizing that the world is not immediately satisfying. This first necessary and inevitable frustration, as Donald Winnicott might have argued with his concept of the "good enough environment"—which must partially fail in the immediate satisfaction of desire—is the initial condition for the development of the Self.

Next is **Acquisition**, where the selective internalization of norms, language, and cultural values occurs. This process immediately intensifies, through **Accumulation**, internal contradictions (e.g., the opposition between personal desire and internalized parental norm or social imperative), amplifying the tensional field. This accumulation of contradictions is not an accident, but the fuel source for subsequent development, creating an internal **zone of proximal development**.

Structuring and Configuring mark the moment when the Self organizes and gives form to these accumulated forces. **Structuring** creates a functional framework for tension management, defining defense mechanisms and adaptation strategies. **Configuring** defines the individual's **confrontational style**—that is, their preferred ways of approaching the struggle, whether to avoid or engage—a concept close to Alfred Adler's idea of the *style of life*, but also to Pierre Bourdieu's

concept of *habitus*, as a generative structure of social and psychic practices.

Subsequently, **Institution** takes place, a process by which the agonistic structure is consolidated, transforming conflict from a series of events isolated into a stable organizational principle of personality, an active and accepted principle of functioning. The Self becomes expert in managing its own tensions. The final stage of becoming is **Ontification**, when the Self attains ontological maturity. It becomes an active and self-regulated presence, capable not only of enduring confrontation, but also of deliberately generating it (by taking on limit-exceeding projects), in order to permanently reaffirm itself and validate the meaning of its struggle—an act of **auto-poiesis** at the ontological level, similar to the ideas of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, a continuous process of system self-creation through self-referentiality.

Once the process of formation is understood, it is necessary to analyze the environment in which the Self exists and validates itself. This environment is not passive, but a constant battleground. The next section will detail the nature of these fundamental conflicts, establishing the Self as the **Field of Internal and Relational Ontological Confrontations**.

6. The Self – Field of Internal and Relational Ontological Confrontations

The Self acts as a total and complex **agonistic field**, being engaged in permanent conflict on three inter-connected levels: internal, intersubjective, and social. Each tension is vital for maintaining its functional energy and for its authentic manifestation in the world.

On the **internal level**, the Self is caught in the middle of its own system. It confronts itself in a continuous struggle with the **Organism**—a confrontation with the **facticity** of the body (illness, fatigue, instincts, death) in which the Self fights for autonomy and **self-mastery**, attempting to transcend the mere somatic state and impose rational will. This is a dichotomy intensely explored by the Philosophy of the Body (Drew Leder) and phenomenology, which emphasizes the opposition between the body-object and the lived body.

There is then the tension between the Self and the **Mind (Cognition)**, a fine struggle between the rational plan of the Self, which coldly analyzes, plans, and calculates risks and logic, on the one hand, and the urgency of action, impulse, or immediate intuition, on the other. This is where the stake of **self-control and decisional freedom** is played, a classic problem in the psychology of the will.

The **Soul (Affectivity)** represents another internal and often the strongest adversary, being the source of overwhelming emotions (passion, fear, anger) that threaten the decisional autonomy of the Self. This is a central theme in Spinoza and Hume, but also in modern psychology of emotions, which sees them as tendencies to action that conflict with the conscious plans of the Self. Here, the Self negotiates between submission to feeling and the imposition of will, fighting to transform raw affects into organized sentiments and directed motivation.

Last but not least, the **Moral Conscience (Superego)** imposes the struggle with internalized norms (the Freudian Superego, or Lawrence Kohlberg's "inner voice"), generating feelings of guilt, obligation, or shame. The Self must negotiate between these instances, and **Observable Behavior** thus becomes the dynamic and visible result of all these opposing forces that temporarily balance each other—an ever-provisional tensional synthesis.

On the **external level**, confrontations extend to the **intersubjective level**. The Self constantly negotiates with **Internalized Alterity**—the voices of authority, parental expectations, and cultural models (e.g., George Herbert Mead spoke of the Significant Other and the Generalized Other)—an essential confrontation with the "other within us" for defining authenticity and avoiding Heideggerian inauthenticity. Finally, the Self directly confronts **Social Alterity**—the World, society, the economic environment, institutions, and dominant culture, which are major sources of constraints and normative expectations. The Self must adapt, fight for resources, power, or recognition (as in Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic, or Jürgen Habermas's social critique regarding the system and the lifeworld). The relationship is one of permanent negotiation and reaffirmation of limits. This perspective aligns with Erving Goffman's sociology, which views social life as a series of tensional-negotiated performances on the public stage.

Having established the nature of these constitutive struggles, the following section will address how the Self actively subsists and maintains itself within this environment of permanent conflict. We will define the **Being and Functioning of the Self as Part of the Personal Ontos**, focusing on the concept of agonistic persistence.

7. The Being and Functioning of the Self as Part of the Personal Ontos

The being of the Self is not a state of passive rest, but manifests as an active and continuous process of **agonistic persistence**—the fundamental act of existing through conflict, which is its source of functional energy. In this theoretical framework, the Self does not pursue absolute peace or static tranquility, an ideal rejected by our thesis, but,

on the contrary, seeks the **highest level of productive tension** it can manage. Only in this tensional zone, situated on the border between equilibrium and disorganization (similar to the concept of the *edge of chaos* in complexity theory), can the Self self-actualize and develop—a concept that recalls Abraham Maslow's ideas about the fulfillment of potential, but viewed through the lens of struggle and sustained effort as a method to overcome the resistance of the world and its own inertia.

Within the Personal Ontos, the Self is, by definition, the **center generator of tension**. It does not function merely as a passive mediator between drives, but initiates necessary confrontations, questioning its own beliefs to prevent stagnation and avoid entering **psychic entropy**—a state of disorganization lacking purpose or meaning (a problem analyzed by Viktor Frankl). Its essential role is that of a **dynamic stabilizer** that maintains the functional cohesion of the Ontos, integrating the other instances (Organism, Mind, Soul, Moral Conscience) through the continuous flow of confrontation and temporary resolution. This dynamic of tensions maintains the system of being in an always unstable, yet functional and vibrant equilibrium.

The Self thus ensures, through its confrontational function, that the Personal Ontos does not become blocked in any definitive synthesis, remaining open to the future (**Telegence**). By deliberately taking on new conflicts (e.g., assuming a new difficult social role), the Self reconfirms its **agency** and its role as an active subject. Without this ontological struggle, the Personal Ontos would become a disorganized collection of impulses and norms, losing its capacity to project a unitary meaning and give direction. Thus, the functioning of the Self within the Ontos is governed by a law of **self-maintenance through conflict**, in which every overcome confrontation solidifies and extends the boundaries of the Personal Ontos, conferring upon it a deep structural resilience and a richer narrative identity.

Having established the functioning mechanisms of the Self, the final analytical step is to explore how this agonistic structure manifests outwardly. The next section will synthesize the entire argument, showing the direct consequences of the Ontological-Confrontational perspective on the definition of **Personality, Personhood, and the Person's Conduct**.

8. The Self from an Ontological-Confrontational Perspective, Personality, Personhood, and the Person's Conduct

Our narrative culminates in the definition of the Self not as a static or harmoniously conceived structure, as the philosophical tradition from

Plato to Descartes suggested, but as a fundamental **agonistic structure**. The Self is, in the Ontological-Confrontational view, a central onto-formation and the pulsating nucleus of the **Personal Ontos**, that essential space where internal and external confrontations are not accidents, but constitutive principles and the driving force of being. Tension is not a pathology, but a *sine qua non* condition of dynamic existence. The Self functions as a dynamic field of forces, similar to Hegelian dialectics, where the opposition between it and the other onto-formations of the Personal Ontos generates vital energy and cohesion. The being of the Self is a continuous **agonistic persistence**, seeking not peace, but the highest level of manageable productive tension, an always unstable equilibrium necessary for **ontification**.

This approach is validated by the analysis of how the Self tensionally interacts with the other onto-formations of the Personal Ontos. The Self engages, first, in a struggle with the **Organism**, the confrontation with its biological **facticity**: instincts, physical limitations, illness, and fragility. Through this effort to transcend the factual, to impose will over the simple somatic state (e.g., disciplining the body), the Self obtains **self-mastery**, and success in this struggle decisively contributes to the **Personality**'s character, establishing how resilient or disciplined the individual will be. Another internal struggle unfolds with the **Mind (Cognition)**, where tension arises between the rational plan of the Self—the one that coldly analyzes, plans, and calculates risks—and the automatism of thought, cognitive routines, or the urgency of logical impulses. The Self fights here for **self-control and decisional autonomy**, and the result of this confrontation directly shapes the **Personality** traits related to conscientiousness and the capacity for reflection.

Furthermore, the confrontation with the **Soul (Affectivity)** is often the most dramatic, involving the force of overwhelming passions and emotions (fear, anger, love) that threaten the Self's autonomy. Here, the Self negotiates between submission to feeling and the imposition of will, fighting to transform raw affects into organized sentiments and directed motivation. The way the Self manages this tension determines the **Personality**'s temperament and its level of **emotional stability**, directly influencing **Personhood** by defining its ethical sensitivity. Finally, the struggle with the **Moral Conscience (Superego)** imposes the essential negotiation with internalized norms (the Freudian Superego, or the categorical imperatives). The Self fights here for **ethical authenticity** and responsible assumption of norms, determining whether the **Person** will submit blindly or will actively adopt and assume responsibility for a moral code.

All these internal and external confrontations converge and are synthesized into the concept of **Personality**. This is no longer a rigid structure defined by fixed traits, but the **dynamic and historical result of the struggle**—a flexible repertoire of acquired **tensional-resilient**

strategies and responses through which the Self has learned to manage the complex and inherent contradictions of the Ontos. **Personhood** is the subsequent manifestation of the Personal Ontos in the public, socio-axiological space. It represents the Self that has recognized itself in this public space, assuming responsibility for its struggle in the face of others, according to the requirements of recognition and moral commitment. It is the subject whose **moral identity is earned through confrontation** and responsible assumption, not through passive conformity.

And the final and visible expression of this entire complex tensional system is the **Person's Conduct**. Conduct is not a passive response to stimuli, but the dynamic and final result of the internal **agonistic equilibrium**—a strategy chosen by the Self to manage or resolve a specific internal or external crisis. Thus, a resilient conduct reflects a Self capable of a high agonistic equilibrium, demonstrating that the continuous conflict of the Self with the other onto-formations of the Personal Ontos is, paradoxically, the **ordering principle** that gives form, meaning, and dynamic stability to the entire being. The Self actively utilizes internal tensions for the unification and definition of the subject in the world. The Self configures **Personality** as a synthetic structure of resilience. This structure, projected into the social space, becomes **Personhood**, the subject capable of moral action. Finally, the sum of these adjustments and struggles materializes as **Conduct**, which is nothing other than the operational expression of how the Self succeeded in transforming the tensional chaos of the Personal Ontos into a coherent strategy of existence and affirmation of freedom. The article now moves to the final chapter to consolidate these findings and formalize the conclusions of this radical paradigm shift.

9. Conclusions

The present article, articulated under the aegis of the title **THE SELF FROM AN ONTOLOGICAL-CONFRONTATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: Personality, Personhood, and the Person's Conduct – Towards a New Interpretation?**, has highlighted the radical **NECESSITY** of a rupture from the ontological-static and structural paradigm that has dominated thought about the Self for millennia. We have demonstrated that the answer to the question launched in the Introduction is an imperative "Yes": we stand before a new interpretation which affirms that **confrontation is not merely a psychological variable or a system error, but represents the active and fundamental ontological principle of being**. To consider the Self merely a thinking substance destined for harmony means to ignore its essential nature as an **agonistic structure** within the Personal Ontos, a structure destined for dynamic perenniality.

The central thesis was demonstrated by evidencing the fact that the Being of the Self is not passive repose or absolute stability, but a continuous and tensional persistence—an essential **agonistic persistence**. This central onto-formation does not just survive tensions and oppositions, but utilizes them as kinetic energy to develop and actualize itself. We have shown that ontification and full development are impossible without the active management of tensions, as confrontation functions as its engine and source of ontological actualization. The Self is thus confirmed as a **field of ontological confrontations**—a continuous and necessary struggle with the other onto-formations of the Personal Ontos: the Self imposes will over the Organism, establishes autonomy against the Mind (Cognition), modulates the force of the Soul (Affectivity), and negotiates the legitimacy of the Moral Conscience. This four-way friction does not disorganize, but, paradoxically, configures and solidifies the subject, conferring upon it superior dynamic cohesion.

Consequently, the view of psychic and social structures is entirely reconfigured. **Personality** is no longer perceived as a fixed typology or a passively inherited set of traits, but as a **dynamic synthesis**, a historical repertoire of the agonistic strategies chosen and refined by the Self. **Personhood** becomes the Socio-Axiological Subject whose moral identity is always earned through confrontation and responsible assumption in the face of norms and demands for social recognition, and not through simple passive conformity or superficial adaptation. And the **Person's Conduct** is redefined as the operational expression and visible confrontation strategy, which reveals the degree of internal tensional equilibrium and the Self's capacity to transform opposition into effective action, reflecting the quality of its being.

This theory necessitates an irreversible paradigm shift, one that rejects the idyllic vision of the non-tensional subject. We have demonstrated that the ideal of static harmony must be replaced by that of **agonistic equilibrium**, a concept far more faithful to existential dynamics and the philosophy of force. **THE SELF FROM AN ONTOLOGICAL-CONFRONTATIONAL PERSPECTIVE** validates confrontation as the inexhaustible source of freedom and development, because only in the face of resistance can will be affirmed and ontological actualization be achieved. The article does not just propose a new interpretation; it establishes that it is necessary to recognize confrontation not as a burden to be avoided, but as the primordial force that generates meaning and actualization.

© Petru Stefaroi 2025